

TAKING CHARGE AT SOUTH BAY MENTAL HEALTH

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



Over forty clients graduated from *Taking Charge*, a course in solid stress management and practical life-enhancement skills, held at South Bay Mental Health (SBMH) on Tuesday, August 28, 2012. Facilitated by Bob Dey of Recovery Inc. and hosted by Gary Gougis, Deanna King and Natasha Lewis-Mouton, the eight-week course teaches practical, effective techniques for mental fitness. *Taking Charge* is a challenging, interactive class that encourages attendees to take back their self-esteem, power and "the self" using the book by Rose Van Sickle entitled *Peace of Body, Peace of Mind*.

Bob has been facilitating the class since 2004 and has seen the number of graduating members climb. Gary makes sure the attendance remains high by contacting members before each class and welcoming them when they arrive.



"The class provides students with tools to reduce the angry and fearful temper," Gary said. "It's about how we function, not about how we feel."

Training Coordinator Luis Escalante was on hand with certificates and congratulations. "The class is compatible with Cognitive Behavioral techniques," Luis said, in support of the program.



Jim H. experienced severe panic attacks and anxiety along with drug addiction. At the graduation, he told a story highlighting how he'd used a couple of the principals he'd learned. "I was having a hard time leaving my house," he said. "A friend wanted me to drive to Ohio with him and I was having a hard time making the decision whether or not to go. I didn't make a decision until 11PM the night before, and he wanted to leave at 6AM the next morning. I was able to use the principals of 'making a firm decision gives me strength' and 'calm begets calm' and made the decision to go. Once we left downtown L.A., I was fine. We stayed with my friend's sister, who happened to be having a lot of the same problems I had. I told her about the course and gave her my copy of *Peace of Body, Peace of Mind* because I thought she needed it more than I did. She was very interested and reading it helped. When I returned to L.A., Gary gave me another copy."

The graduates were all smiles as they claimed their certificates and enjoyed snacks and a cake after the ceremony.



